

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated April 5, 2006. Claims 1 to 11 and 13 to 19 are pending in the application, with Claim 12 having been cancelled. Claims 1 to 11 have been withdrawn from consideration, and Claims 13 to 18 have been amended. Of the claims presented for examination, Claims 13 and 15 are in independent form. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

In the Office Action, Claims 12 and 17 to 19 were rejected for obviousness-type double patenting over issued Claims 6 to 9 of U.S. Patent No. 6,506,087. Claim 12 has been cancelled without prejudice or disclaimer of subject matter and without conceding the correctness of its rejection. Thus, the rejection is seen to be obviated.

Claims 13, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 5,561,343 (Lowe); and Claims 15, 17 and 18 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Lowe in view of U.S. patent No. 5,721,050 (Roman). Reconsideration and withdrawal are respectfully requested.

The present invention generally concerns the manufacturing of an image forming apparatus having an envelope made of members inclusive of a first substrate and a second substrate disposed at a space being set therebetween, image forming means and spacers disposed in the envelope, the spacers maintaining the space and each having a conductive film at an abutting portion upon the first or second substrate. According to one feature of the invention, a first spacer base member is cut to form a second spacer base member, and a non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member is immersed into

solution containing conductive substances to transfer the solution to the non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member.

Referring specifically to the claims, independent Claim 13 as amended is directed to a method of manufacturing an image forming apparatus having an envelope made of members inclusive of a first substrate and a second substrate disposed at a space being set therebetween, image forming means and spacers disposed in the envelope, the spacers maintaining the space and each having a conductive film at an abutting portion upon the first or second substrate. The method includes the steps of cutting a first spacer base member to form a second spacer base member, and immersing a non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member into solution containing conductive substances to transfer the solution to the non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member. The method also includes the steps of heating the conductive substances to form the conductive film, and abutting the non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member formed with the conductive film upon the first or second substrate.

Independent Claim 15 as amended is directed to a method of manufacturing an image forming apparatus having an envelope made of members inclusive of a first substrate and a second substrate disposed at a space being set therebetween, image forming means and spacers disposed in the envelope, the spacers maintaining the space and each having a conductive film at an abutting portion upon the first or second substrate. The method includes the steps of heating and drawing a first spacer base member, cutting the heated and drawn first spacer base member to form a second spacer base member, and immersing a non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member formed by heating/drawing into solution containing conductive substances to transfer the solution to

the non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member. The method also includes the steps of heating the conductive substances to form the conductive film, and abutting the non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member formed with the conductive film upon the first or second substrate.

The applied art is not seen to disclose or to suggest the features of the invention of the subject application. In particular, Lowe and Roman are not seen to disclose at least the feature of cutting a first spacer base member to form a second spacer base member, and immersing a non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member into solution containing conductive substances to transfer the solution to the non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member.

As understood by Applicants, Lowe discloses a spacer for spacing the screen of a flat panel display from the backplate of the display. See Lowe, Abstract. Spacers are supplied in the form of a continuous fibre to a positioning head comprising an ultrasonic horn. After application of the sealing frit to the back plate, but before each spacer placement, the free end of the fibre is dipped in a reservoir of molten metal. The metal-coated free end is then placed at a spacer site on the back plate and welded into position by the ultrasonic horn. A controlled length of fibre is then dispensed from the positioning head and guillotined off by a cutter. See Lowe, column 6, lines 21 to 32.

However, nothing in Lowe seen to disclose or suggest that a first spacer base member is cut to form a second spacer base member, and that a non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member is immersed into solution containing conductive substances to transfer the solution to the non-cut end portion of the second spacer base member.

In addition, Roman has been reviewed and is not seen to compensate for the deficiencies of Lowe.

Accordingly, based on the foregoing amendments and remarks, independent Claims 13 and 15 as amended are believed to be allowable over the applied references.

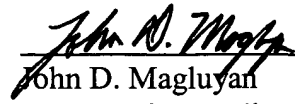
The other claims in the application are each dependent from the independent claims and are believed to be allowable over the applied references for at least the same reasons. Because each dependent claim is deemed to define an additional aspect of the invention, however, the individual consideration of each on its own merits is respectfully requested.

Turning to a formal matter, the copy of the Form PTO-1449 provided with the Office Action, corresponding to the Information Disclosure Statement dated January 21, 2004, was not initialed with respect to any of the cited references. In addition, the Form PTO-1449 was not signed by the Examiner. Applicants therefore respectfully request that the Examiner return another initialed copy of the Form PTO-1449 which indicates that all of the listed references have been considered.

No other matters being raised, it is believed that the entire application is fully in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicants' undersigned attorney may be reached in our Costa Mesa,
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our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,



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